

## January 2026 Newsletter

### From the President

#### U3A Ellesmere Constitution

I am pleased to report that the committee received some valuable feedback from several members concerning the new constitution, and this has been taken on board by us in preparing the final version. The revised document, together with another providing information on where we go from here, is included in the email with this newsletter. The Special General Meeting for members to vote on acceptance of the revised constitution, will be after our regular meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

#### The Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> March, after our regular meeting.

I have already signalled that there are likely to be several vacancies on the committee for 2026. The current committee comprises seven members (ie, president, secretary, treasurer and four committee members), and according to our rules, this is the minimum number for us to function. So I want you to think seriously about offering your services to U3A Ellesmere as a committee member for this year. Having a larger committee enables the various administrative roles to be spread more evenly. The specific portfolios of president, secretary and treasurer are essential to the continuation of our U3A.

Nomination papers for the committee will be available at our February meeting. You may nominate another member and obtain their signed acceptance, or nominate yourself and obtain another member's signature.

John F. Kennedy's famous 1961 inaugural address quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," urged Americans to prioritize public service and collective responsibility over personal gain. I urge you to consider how you can serve your U3A this year.

If you are thinking about putting your hand up to join the committee, but are unsure of what you are committing yourself to, feel free to chat to me, or another committee member. (My mobile number is 028 415 4961.) The tasks of a committee member are not onerous, and I'm sure they are within the experience and skills of many of you.

#### Subscriptions are now due

Please remember that your 2026 subscription (\$35 for current members, \$40 for new members) is now due and should be paid prior to the AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Here are the instructions if you are paying by internet banking:

- U3A Ellesmere Westpac Account **03-0767-0001025-000**.
  - For "Details on their statement" - please enter your **Family Name** in the "Particulars" box and your **Given Name** in the "Code" Box. Enter **U3A sub26** in the "Reference" box.  
(If your names are more than the available characters, enter just those that fit. This will be enough for the Treasurer to identify your payment.)
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## Our next speakers

### Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February

Our speaker will be Andrea Webley and her topic will be “Canterbury Museum – Past Present and Future”

Andrea Webley, Fundraising and Development Manager, will give an illustrated talk about the Museum’s major redevelopment of its Rolleston Avenue site. She will discuss the evolution of the Museum’s building complex over the last 150 plus years, the numerous reasons behind the need for the redevelopment, and the massive project to move the collection and staff to offsite storage and offices while running an open Museum. The talk will conclude with some sneak peeks at what the new Museum will look like when it reopens in 2029.

Andrea joined the Museum team two years ago after returning to Christchurch from time working in Auckland. Born and bred in Canterbury, she is excited to be part of this historic project which will see Canterbury opening a world-leading museum in 2029. Her role is primarily to raise funds for the redevelopment project but also to raise awareness and look for opportunities to engage the community in the project and ongoing, once the Museum opens. Andrea has a degree in commerce from the University of Canterbury.

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March (note that this is the third Wednesday of the month)

Dr Sam Hampton’s topic will be “Volcanology of Te Pātaka of Rākaihautū / Banks Peninsula”.

Sam is the Director of Academic Programmes for Frontiers Abroad Aotearoa, and a Lecturer in the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Canterbury.

His research has been on the volcanic development of Banks Peninsula, an area incorporated into the Geology Programme of Frontiers Abroad as a new field and research site. Sam has a broad geological background, being involved in exploration on the West Coast (NZ), geological engineering projects, geological hazards, and extensive undergraduate teaching. He has also been involved in course development and teaching at the University of Canterbury, including geological hazards.

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## The Last Word(s) – The wisdom of Thomas Jefferson

*In 1825, the year before his death, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, was asked by a father to supply some words of wisdom to his young son, Thomas Jefferson. Thomas had recently been named after the President. Jefferson graciously responded to the father’s request with a handwritten letter, at the end of which was a ten-point list of advice for the youngster, titled, “A Decalogue of Canons for Observations in Practical Life”:*

1. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
2. Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.
3. Never spend your money before you have it.
4. Never buy what you do not want because it is cheap; it will be dear to you.
5. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst and cold.
6. We never repent of having eaten too little.
7. Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.
8. How much pain has cost us the evils which have never happened.
9. Take things always by their smooth handle
10. When angry, count to ten before you speak; if very angry count to one hundred.

## More Last Word(s)

These days it seems we often hear of folk, especially the elderly, being conned into parting with their money by unscrupulous people. I came across the following advice to help us avoid being a victim of a scam:

### Spotting a scam

In today's digital age our online interactions, from scrolling through social media to making purchases, are fraught with risks from deceptive schemes and scammers. Do you receive some emails which look suspicious? One way of checking for a scam is the email address of the sender. If it looks very different from the person, company or organisation that they are claiming to represent, then you should instantly delete the email. Poor grammar or spelling mistakes are also warning signs. It's called 'smelling a rat'. Despite frequent warnings in the media, scams are on the rise, and we are told that they are getting harder to spot. Check for red flags and take action with **S C A M S**:

**S**urprised at the message?

**C**ontrolling behaviour?

**A**ccess requested?

**M**oney requested

If yes to any of the above, then:

**S**top and seek support

**Surprise** could look like:

- Your account is overdue
- Your computer has a virus

**Control** could look like:

- Act now or miss out!
- Pay direct, bypass systems

**Access** could look like:

- Verify account by logging in
- Give us remote access

**Money** could look like:

- Pay a 'processing fee' to qualify for a prize
- Send gift cards to help an online friend

If you have already paid money to a scammer:



- Contact your bank immediately
- Reach out to your family for support
- Contact Netsafe (0508 638 723) for advice about next steps

For more useful information, visit <https://netsafe.org.nz/older-people>

Remember the old adage: *If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.!*

From the Department of Internal Affairs web site:

<https://www.dia.govt.nz/Spam-About-Scams-and-Phishing>

 What are the signs that indicate a message may be a scam? 



Sent from a public domain such as Gmail, Yahoo, or Live, but claims to be from a business or well-known organisation



Contains too many grammatical or spelling errors



Gets your name wrong (e.g. refers to you as my dear)



Sent from a contact but does not match how they normally talk to you



Someone asks for financial help (e.g. so they can pay debts or visit you)



Says you have inherited money or possessions from someone you've never heard of



Claims to be from a financial institution or a well known entity and requests your personal information





Includes a link to an address or an attachment you are unsure about



Says you need to claim money or prizes for a lottery

## How to identify a phishing attempt

Phishing is a type of scam where a scammer attempts to deceive individuals into giving their sensitive personal information by impersonating a reputable organisation (such as a bank or government agency) via email or message.

 What are the signs that indicate a message or email may be a phishing attempt? 



It contains an offer that is **too good to be true**. This could be an eye-catching or attention-grabbing statement that offers a prize or free rewards



It contains **attachments**, which may install malware on to your device - the only reasonably safe files are .txt files



It creates a **sense of urgency** where you are told you have limited time and must do something immediately



It comes from an **unusual sender**, even if it comes from someone you know, be cautious if it is an unexpected message or email



It contains a **hyperlink** - some of which may be a random address, or a URL designed to look like a common website but with a small typo such as an 'm' instead of an 'n'

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## Committee responsibilities for 2025/26:

**President** – Errol Wood, **Vice-President** – John Prendergast, **Secretary** – Murray Allison,

**Treasurer** – Neal Borrie **Interest Groups Coordinator** - Lyn Minchington

**Constitution Revision** – Nancy Borrie **Membership Coordinator** – Dorothy Jordan

**Morning Tea Team Leader** – Nola Sutherland (not a committee member)